



Cabinet

8 December 2021

Report of: Councillor Joe Orson - Leader of the Council

Corporate Performance and Progress Report for Quarter 2 2021-22

Corporate Priority:	All Corporate Priorities
Relevant Ward Member(s):	All
Date of consultation with Ward Member(s):	N/A
Exempt Information:	No

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Cabinet on progress on delivering the aspirations set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2020-2024. It includes a commentary on each of the Council's Corporate Priorities, and is supported by the Council's Corporate Performance Measures which are appended to the report. The report provides details relating to the first and second quarters of the financial year 2021-22.

2 Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 **Note the contents of the report and provide any observations or actions to the relevant officers accordingly.**

3 Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 Having established a new Corporate Strategy in September 2020, is it important the Council regularly receives and considers performance information to evaluate progress. The Council's Corporate Performance Measures are used to focus on key priority services and projects and seek to help inform the Cabinet, Members and Officers with regard to the formation of policy and oversight of delivery. This report will be provided to Cabinet twice a year and will also be provided to the Scrutiny Committee to enable them to consider appropriate areas for their Workplan.

4 Background

- 4.1 In September 2020, the Council approved a new Corporate Strategy 2020-24. The Strategy has six priority themes and a range of objectives which seek to respond to local needs and issues, corporate aspirations and the impacts arising from Covid. To enable progress to be effectively monitored, a refreshed basket of corporate performance measures was established. The purpose of the corporate measures is to ensure that Cabinet and senior managers have effective oversight of key corporate activity, service performance and progress against the Council's aspirations. The corporate measures are supported by a range of service measures overseen by operational managers.
- 4.2 At its meeting on 23 September 2021 the Council approved a Performance & Risk Management Framework which sets out the Council's approach to managing performance and risk as it seeks to ensure delivery of its Corporate Strategy priorities, as well as ensuring effective service performance and organisational governance. The document sets out an annual calendar which demonstrates how performance and risk management will be more closely aligned and help inform the development of policies and the council's budget. This report is in line with this framework and calendar.

5 Main Considerations

- 5.1 Within each section below a summary of progress against each of the six Corporate Priorities is provided. The summaries provide an update on progress towards delivering key objectives and projects as set out within the Strategy. They also highlight key areas of achievement, as well as particular performance or delivery challenges and risks. Where issues are highlighted, actions to address and improve are also set out.
- 5.2 The Corporate Performance Measures Dashboard, used to support the monitoring and oversight of delivery are contained at appendix 1. Where applicable, and to enable trends to be analysed, the Dashboard provides a rolling two years' worth of data (8 quarters) on the key performance measures against each priority. Where available, benchmarking and comparator data is also provided. More detailed progress updates on key corporate projects are also included.
- 5.3 **Summary of Progress against each Corporate Priority**
- 5.3.1 **Helping People - Priority 1: Excellent services positively impacting on our communities**
- 5.3.2 As we emerge from the Covid 19 pandemic there has been a renewed focus on developing an integrated people offer. This includes modernising our offer to customers, improving our offer for customers in need of support and ensuring we take every opportunity to use data, evidence and insights to improve the way we work, whilst also progressing opportunities to align and integrate services to enable better outcomes for customers.
- 5.3.3 There has been notable progress in developing the IEG4 platform to enable customers to access services online, including the development of a new and accessible web form for pre application planning advice and payment. As online forms are developed, they are rule driven to ensure they are more intuitive and user friendly, and from a service delivery perspective; enable services to work more efficiently. Work is underway with services to

better understand their demand, customer offer, customer journey and how IEG4 can assist in the future to enable more customers to access the services they need at the right time. Additionally, analysis of emails to the customer services team inbox to understand trends in customer queries has led to a 'contact us' form being added to the council website, which provides information, relevant links and supports customers to access services and forms online. Officers continue to support customers where needed.

5.3.4 There has been an increase in complaints, and this is covered in more detail later in the report. Whilst there is a process in place to record and respond appropriately to complaints, there has been a gap in being able to analyse complaints to generate insights, understand trends and embed learning. This will be addressed through some operational changes over the next quarter to enable more analysis and learning across the organisation.

5.3.5 Preventing homelessness and reducing the number of households and time spent in temporary accommodation (particularly bed and breakfast accommodation) remains a key priority. It is pleasing to see improved homelessness prevention performance this quarter. The data also shows an improving situation regarding move on from temporary accommodation. There are several things that have contributed to improved performance including improved voids performance and turnover / availability of empty properties; the role of the move on officer within the case management team to assist with throughput, and a focus on homelessness prevention. However, there is more to do and this remains a high priority area of work. Over the next quarter there will be a number of additional things in progress, including; an audit of temporary accommodation, exploration of options to reduce reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation, progression of scrutiny committee recommendations, and implementation of a government funded 'vulnerable renters' offer. There will also be improved communication with landlords and private rented sector tenants, greater integration with the case management team / change of leadership of the housing options team, implementation of a homelessness case management system and consultation on a revised housing allocations policy. Officers will also work with other Leicestershire Councils to develop bids for Government funding to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. A key appointment has also been made – with the Council being joined by an experienced strategic lead for homelessness prevention and housing options from February 2022.

5.4 **Helping People - Priority 2: Providing high quality council homes and landlord services**

5.4.1 Our teams understand and are committed to delivering services in line with the requirements of the Charter for Social Housing Residents. There has been a lot of work to ensure the continued focus on providing high quality council homes and landlord services, including through a period of staffing changes within key roles within the team. Service continuity and momentum has been maintained and the council's landlord services, and key programmes of work continue to be led by experienced officers - all with a focus on continuous improvement. This is testament to the commitment of the whole team. Future staffing requirements, roles and responsibilities are currently being considered to ensure stability, resilience and effective service delivery for landlord services.

5.4.2 There are notable examples of service excellence during the quarter, including the work across teams and partners to support a family displaced by a house fire and the successful resettlement of a family from Afghanistan.

- 5.4.3 The Council remains focussed on compliance in all areas of health and safety, has been able to develop and implement an asset / housing management module within the Northgate system to enable stock condition data to be received and compliance monitored, and has improved processes to bring vacant (void) properties back into use in line with the councils re-let standards. Over the period of the last quarter, a detailed member briefing and progress update has been delivered by key officers with the portfolio holder.
- 5.4.4 A full stock condition survey is underway. This is a significant programme of work which will support the council to move towards a more proactive and planned approach to housing improvements through the development of the Housing Revenue Account 30-year business plan and associated delivery plan. The initial tranche of stock condition data is due by the end of November 2021 with the remaining data due later this year. In future years, 20% of stock will be surveyed each year. The draft business plan is in development, led by our Interim Assistant Director. The Council's Scrutiny Committee has included the HRA business plan on its work programme, and a workshop is scheduled for 7th December 2021.
- 5.4.5 Another key work programme linked to the Charter for Social Housing Residents is meaningful tenant and leaseholder engagement. Hearing from and working with tenants to improve our services is important and will form a key part of our future engagement strategy. A new framework for tenant and leaseholder engagement has been drafted and will be considered by Cabinet later this year. It has been developed in line with feedback from tenant groups. The framework will provide more opportunities for more tenants to be involved, engaged and to have an active role in holding the council to account. As part of the Council's tenant and leaseholder engagement approach, a tenant satisfaction survey has recently been carried out by specialists within the housing sector, Acuity. The findings are currently being analysed and benchmarked with other landlords before being published. Opportunities to improve what we do will be included within an action plan, linked to the tenant and leaseholder engagement framework. A tenant and leaseholder newsletter has also been issued during November 2021.
- 5.5 Shaping Places - Priority 3: Delivering sustainable and inclusive growth in Melton**
- 5.5.1 Over the last 18 months, where COVID-19 has impacted, the focus for all place based activities has been on supporting businesses and maintaining regulatory standards. The services have joined hands and worked hard to distribute over £20m grant money over this period in addition to maintaining and delivering regular services to our customers. The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding is being claimed by the eligible businesses in the town centre and through the business start-up support programme.
- 5.5.2 The number of proactive environmental health inspections has gone up this year as the team is able to catch up with the backlog from the last year when COVID restrictions prevented some work taking place. The percentage of food businesses broadly compliant at inspection has remained consistently high and it is positive to note that there hasn't been any negative impact from the pandemic on this measure.
- 5.5.3 Following a period of uncertainty and increased activities during the pandemic, the planning team has seen a significant increase in the number of applications, enforcement actions, complaints and requests for information. As a result, the number of determinations of planning applications within the desired period for both major and non-major applications is down from previous years, but this is comparable with many other planning authorities who are equally under pressure.

- 5.5.4 The new process for validation and determination of planning application is though now fully rolled out and this is delivering positive results which is demonstrated in the significantly reduced number of invalid applications. There is more work to be done in setting up surveys and other ways to measure customer satisfaction in this area which will be developed as part of the performance framework and communication protocol for planning.
- 5.5.5 Despite the impact of lockdown, the delivery of housing in the borough has continued to be in excess of Local Plan projections for the year. This shows high level of market confidence in investment and commercial activities in Melton. There is, however, a significant reduction in the number of applications approved first time by the planning committee; which is a measure of how effectively applications have been prepared in advance of presenting to the committee. The officers will work closely with applicants and the committee members to ensure the quality of reports and information provided to members is appropriate and the quality of decisions being made is appropriate and in line with the aspirations of the delivery of Local Plan.
- 5.5.6 Increased level of commercial investment in Melton is also reflected in higher number of applications for land charges. Despite the increased level of activities, the turnaround time has reduced significantly due to new approaches in process and performance management being introduced in the team.
- 5.5.7 The focus of the newly created corporate assets team over the pandemic period had been on establishing property safety measures and procedure for all our assets. Following achieving 100% compliance for the corporate asset portfolio, the team focussed on commercial lease renewal and getting the vacant units occupied to generate much needed revenue income for the Council. The next area of focus for this team is to prepare a planned maintenance programme informed by condition surveys to support the medium term financial strategy of the Council.
- 5.5.8 The delivery of projects to achieve the key objectives of this priority area has continued making good progress this quarter. The conclusion of North Neighbourhood Masterplan, Developers Contributions SPD, Design SPD and Staged Payment Agreement with Leicestershire County Council will all support positive progress towards delivery of the of MMDR and the Melton Local Plan. Leicestershire County Council have continued working with officers and stakeholders in Melton to prepare the Transport Strategy.
- 5.5.9 The grant agreement has been signed for the award of £500,000 from Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LLEP) through the Business Rate Pool funding to enable the start of the Asset Development Programme. The consultants have been appointed for developing a business case for the health and leisure hub in Melton and consultation has started with stakeholders. Food production businesses have continued to be supported with technical advice, networking with supply chain and signposting for funding through the Food Enterprise Centre project.
- 5.6 **Shaping Places - Priority 4: Protect our climate and enhance our rural natural environment.**
- 5.6.1 The quality of natural environment is one of the unique characteristic of Melton as a place. Maintaining this environment is a key responsibility for the Council's environmental health and environmental maintenance teams. Fly tipping and dog fouling incidents are reported proactively and dealt with immediately. Through the regular monitoring of air quality, we are aware that our environment is 'clean'. Road vehicles and housing are identified as the key

contributors to carbon emissions in the borough. The Council is working closely with Leicestershire Country Council to prepare a transport strategy for the Melton Mowbray urban area which will help towards reducing vehicle emissions.

- 5.6.2 The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, whereby we recognised the magnitude of the issue and as a Local Authority the role we must play in tackling climate change.
- 5.6.3 The Council has commissioned a baseline study of the emissions generated by our own operations. A Statement of Intent to prepare a climate change strategy is due for public consultation in January 2022. Both these works will inform the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for the Council and its partners to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- 5.6.4 We have been working on a series of projects to begin reducing our emissions and to understand our future aims and targets, these include exploring a business case for grant funding for installing electric vehicles charging points, installation of LED lighting and 'A' rated windows in Council housing and accessing over £1.2m grant funding to improve energy efficiency in both council as well as private sector housing with low income families.
- 5.6.5 In order to help the Council deliver these projects, a Climate Change Officer post has been created jointly in partnership with Oadby & Wigston Council from November 2021. In addition to the above projects, the Council has reviewed all internal activities to ensure carbon saving initiatives are promoted across the organisation. The strategies and policies being created by the Council ensure that climate change implications are considered at all stages, for example, Housing Strategy, Design SPD, The Way We Work Strategy etc.
- 5.6.6 Due to the frequency of reporting of countywide data, further information and analysis on recycling and household waste will be provided in the next quarter.
- 5.6.7 There will be an increased focus on the future of waste and recycling over the coming months, with the development of a new strategy for Leicestershire, which is due to be ready for public consultation in January 2022. A report will be considered by Cabinet in December 2021. The Council's Scrutiny Committee has also included the future Waste Strategy on its work programme.
- 5.6.8 Developments with our online platform mean that residents can now report fly tipping online and separately, community litter picks can be registered and collection of the associated waste arranged; further supported the extension to the Council's digital offer.

5.7 **Great council - Priority 5: Ensuring the right conditions to support delivery**

- 5.7.1 One of the key assets of the council are its staff. The performance indicators show that whilst staff satisfaction has improved there has been an increase in leavers. This is quite modest and within tolerance levels and is due to the uplift in the employment market. Alongside this sickness levels for the year to date have increased substantially compared to last year with a large number of long term sickness absence days. HR are working with managers to support individuals back to work and to develop further well-being programmes at work. Work has continued on developing a new operating model for the council with the new Way We Work Strategy being approved by the Cabinet in November and due to be considered by Council in December. The underlying work to support the strategy including linkages to IT and asset development programmes is underway.
- 5.7.2 A huge success for the Council has been the achievement of 100% of our website being compliant with accessibility needs. This is following the successful move to a new website content management system in partnership with Blaby District Council. The new site is

now in the top 3 of all Councils, nationally for accessibility having moved up 245 places on the leaderboard. Further work will continue in improving the website offer as we work with this key partner.

5.7.3 Performance with regard to debt management in respect of business rates and council tax has been good, taking into account the pressures caused by the pandemic on people's ability to meet their debts. There has been considerable pressure on the revenues team as they have supported the Council's work on test and trace payments, hardship relief allocation, increased complexity surrounding business rates reliefs and business grants. Additional resources have been provided to the team to assist with catching up with a backlog of outstanding work using new burdens funding. As part of the associated action plan for the team, work will be undertaken on sundry debts both understanding the council's position more fully and the action that needs to be taken to reduce levels in this area.

5.8 **Great Council - Priority 6: Connected with and led by our Community**

5.8.1 With the introduction of the new audio visual equipment at the beginning of the year, all public meetings are now live streamed and hybrid functionality allows for remote attendance enhancing public access to Council meetings. The first parish council liaison meeting was held in October and this was well attended and provided valuable information to Parish councils.

5.8.2 Unfortunately due to a lack of resources further progress on the council's Melton Deal with local residents has not progressed.

5.8.3 The community grant scheme was successfully concluded for 2021/22 and work has commenced on the allocation for the next financial year. A range of organisations were supported following a bidding process and the costs supported by the funding raised via the Melton lottery.

5.9 **Corporate Complaints**

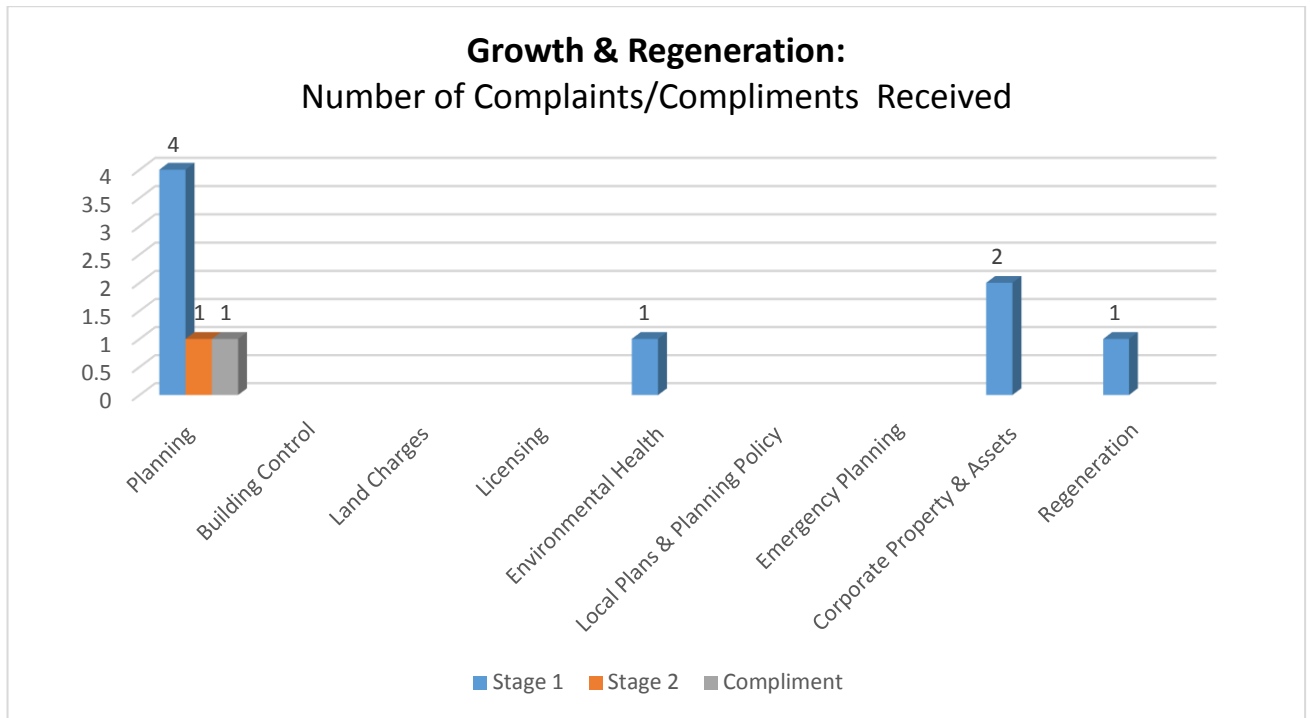
5.10 The Council recognises that complaints are a valuable opportunity to gain feedback, learn and improve services. The Council wants to provide a positive response to complaints and encourages feedback so that positive action can be taken.

5.11 The Corporate Complaints process comprises a two-stage internal process comprising stage one complaints which are dealt with by Service Managers and stage two complaints where the stage one response is reviewed by a Director. Where a complainant remains dissatisfied with the Council's response after this process, they have the opportunity to refer the matter for independent review by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.

5.12 Whilst there is a process in place to record and respond appropriately to complaints, there has been a gap in being able to analyse complaints to generate insights, understand trends and embed learning. This will be addressed through some operational changes over the coming months to enable more analysis and learning across the organisation.

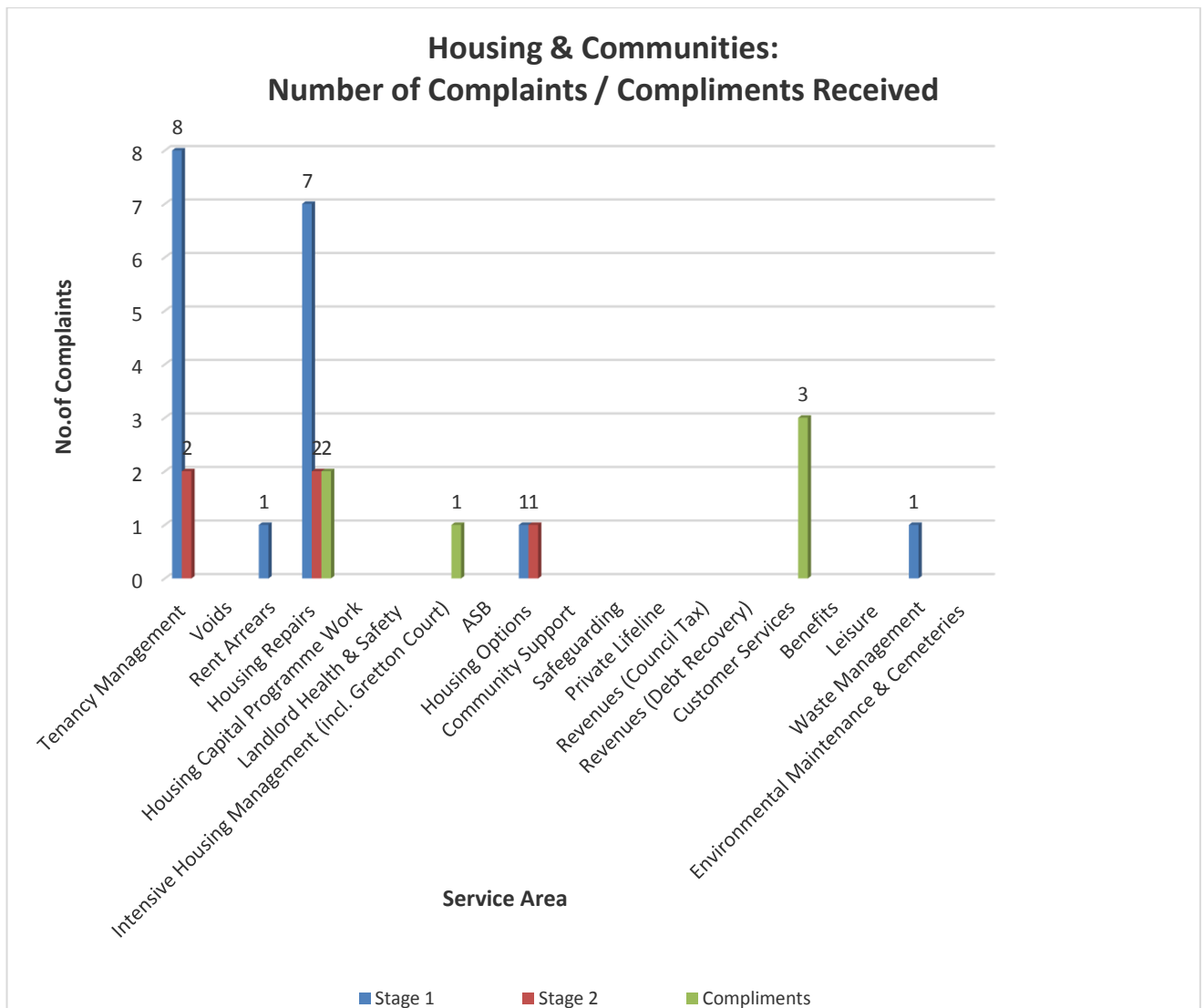
5.13 The appendix shows a breakdown of the number of corporate complaints received during quarters 1 and 2 for the financial year 2021/22 alongside compliments received. In summary:

5.13.1 Growth & Regeneration:



- a) Complaints: In this Directorate we saw changes in complaints in the following areas:
- i) The Council also saw an increase in complaints in Environmental Health from 0 to 1 in respect of an enforcement issue – this complaint was not upheld.
 - ii) The Council saw an increase in complaints in Regeneration from 0 to 1 in respect of the path at the country park – this complaint was not upheld.
 - iii) The Council saw reduction in complaints in Planning from 8 to 5, which is a move in the positive direction.
- b) Compliments: One compliment was received for the Planning Service in respect of dedication and hard work in the progression of applications.
- c) Management Comments: Whilst the number of complaints in this area is low, the increase of complaints in two areas as identified above is noted and activities will be monitored to ensure quality of performance and satisfaction from customers.

5.13.2 Housing & Communities:



- a) Complaints: In this Directorate we saw an increase in complaints in one area; housing repairs:
- i) Housing Repairs has seen the number of complaints increase from 2 to 9. Of the 9 cases, 7 were stage 1 and 2 were stage 2. The complaints predominantly concern delays in service. This was anticipated as a result of the covid pandemic which has restricted the Council's ability to enter properties and undertake repairs. This is recognised by the team as a priority, and they are working through the backlog of repairs. The council's asset manager and key officers are also working proactively with contractors Axis.
 - ii) Moving forward, the full stock condition survey currently underway, development of the HRA business plan / asset management strategy and implementation of a revised assets module in the Northgate IT system will enable the Council to move to a more proactive approach to housing repairs in the future.
 - iii) Compliments: Six compliments were received in this Directorate in the following areas:

- (i) Housing Repairs (2) – thanks for completion of repairs
- (ii) Intensive Housing Management (1) – quick void turnaround times had a positive impact on a resident leaving hospital
- (iii) Customer Services (3) – good customer service

b) Management Comments: Feedback on our services is valuable and will always help us to focus on opportunities for continuous improvement. It is also positive to see the compliments that have been received and for the hard work of our teams and partners to be recognised. Feedback and compliments are always shared with relevant officers, and we encourage our teams to reflect on all feedback, including celebrating the things that have worked well. Further analysis of trends and insights from complaints in the future will be valuable to improve service delivery.

5.13.3 Corporate Services:

a) No complaints were received for Corporate Services in Q2.

5.14 Ombudsman Complaints

5.14.1 One decision was issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in July 2021 (reference: 19 014 915). In this complaint, Mrs X complained about the way the Council dealt with flooding issues and the impact of the development of sports pitches on a watercourse. The LGSCO found there was fault that warranted a remedy. Officers are working on the recommendations made by the LGSCO.

6 Options Considered

6.1 No alternatives were considered as a decision is not required.

7 Consultation

7.1 The performance data contained in the report and the appendix are to inform the Cabinet. Individual performance items may be taken up by the Scrutiny Committee, as part of their enquiries into the effective operations of the Council.

8 Next Steps – Implementation and Communication

8.1 The current position with regard to performance and delivery of the Corporate Priorities will be communicated to all members and will be placed on the Council's website.

9 Financial Implications

9.1 There are no specific financial implications in the Report.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Corporate Services Manager (deputy s151 officer)

10 Legal and Governance Implications

- 10.1 There are no specific Legal and Governance implications in the Report.
- 10.2 Regular reporting on an agreed performance dashboard is to be welcomed from a governance point of view, as it provides a transparent mechanism for reporting on performance.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Monitoring Officer

11 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 11.1 There are no specific Equality and Safeguarding implications in the Report.

12 Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no specific Community Safety implications in the Report, however there are specific indicators reporting on Community Safety performance.

13 Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 13.1 There are no specific Environmental and Climate Change implications in the report, however as part of priority 4 there are Environment and Climate Change targets monitored as part of the corporate performance measures.

14 Other Implications (where significant)

- 14.1 The performance shown against the performance measures in Appendix 1 is important performance feedback information for directorates and their services, which is intended to provide them with data to enable them to take action towards the improvement of the operation of their services, or to provide confirmatory evidence of what is currently working.

15 Risk & Mitigation

- 15.1 There are no direct risks arising from this report, all risks from the individual projects/activities will be managed through individual projects and by the relevant Directorates

16 Background Papers

- 16.1 No background papers are included with this report.

17 Appendices

- 17.1 Appendix 1 – Corporate Performance Measures Dashboard, Quarter 1 and 2, 2021-22

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